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SOME EXTERNAL EVIDENCE ON THE ORIGINAL
FORM OF THE LEGEND OF JOB.

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In a former paper on this subject in the *Journal of Biblical Exegesis*, Vol. XIV., pp. 63-71, I attempted to show that the writer of our present book of Job made use of a popular legend which may have been either written or oral in form. That he, however, considerably altered and developed this legend, treating it freely as the Greek tragedians treated the heroic myths, or as the story of Tristram and Iseult has been variously developed by different poets of our century. That he, especially, changed the whole attitude of Job towards his sufferings and Him who sent them. That, while in the original legend Job, as so often in folk-tales, was patient throughout and uttered no word of complaint against his God, the Job of the new poem could not express himself too strongly against the world as he experienced it and its Ruler as he was compelled to imagine Him. That patience and resignation could in no terms be predicated of the Job of our present book.

This view of the original form of the story was derived entirely from a consideration of the book itself and, especially, of the relation between the prologue and epilogue on the one hand and the body of the poem on the other. No account was taken of any possible external evidence, for I did not realize the direction of

the drift of the few references to the book of Job which exist. I propose here, however, to take up these references and examine them in detail.

The first comes in Ezekiel 14:14-20, where Job is adduced, beside Noah and Daniel, as a possessor of צדקה, righteousness. This one fact, taken in connection with Ezekiel's own character and with the drift of the passage, renders it impossible that we can have here a reference to the hero of our canonical book.

It is clear from chapter 18 that Ezekiel held a strong doctrine of retribution, and that, too, absolutely individualistic in type. What each man does is to be visited upon him; good if he has done well, evil if he has done ill. Ezekiel, therefore, would have been all with Job's friends and could have seen in Job's misfortunes nothing but the result of his own evil deeds. But in this passage he brackets Job with Noah and Daniel as an emphatically righteous man, such a man as could save his soul before God, though he might not be able to do any more. The inference intended is that no one, however righteous, could do more. Further, the content of the passage is worth noticing. It is a prophecy of the approaching fall of Jerusalem and a statement of its cause, the sinfulness of the people. If the people turn again to God they will be saved, but nothing can save those who do not turn. When a land sins against God, its fate falls upon it. The righteous in it may be able to save themselves, but beyond themselves they cannot save even their own children. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in that land, they could do no more. If the reference here is to the Job of our book, who thunders through thirty chapters against God's rule of the world and can find in it no sign of justice, who would accept a doctrine of retribution, but cannot see it at work around him, and who, finally, makes the most insufficient death-bed conversion thinkable, Ezekiel must have been hard driven for cases in point.

But why, we may ask, has he chosen these three names? Is it not because they stood to him for men who had successfully passed through trouble and temptation, and lived an upright life in the midst of evil, as righteous men in a sinful land? Noah, the preacher of righteousness to an evil generation before the flood; Daniel, the Jew who preserved his purity at the heathen court; these were true examples of such uprightness. And evidently the story of Job which had reached Ezekiel was the story

of another who had passed through temptation unscathed. That is, it was the original popular story of Job as I reconstructed it in my former paper. To Ezekiel the book of Job in its present shape would have been a scandal and a stumbling-block, and its hero with his tardy repentance could have been no fit example of the righteousness that saves.

The only other reference to Job by name that occurs in the Bible is in James 5:11. There we read: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job (τὴν ὑπομονὴν Ἰὼβ) and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity and merciful." This comes at the close of an exhortation to patience and endurance with a reference to the prophets as examples of such patience. There is a command with it not to murmur one against another, that we be not judged.

Now of all these virtues the Job of our book can hardly be called a shining example. He murmurs with singular emphasis both against his friends and against God. He suffers certainly, and he may even be said to endure, in a sense, but it is not with patience. In fact, to speak of "the patience of Job" is to ascribe to him the one virtue which he is not described as possessing. He is patient in the prologue which was taken from the original legend, but the moment we enter on the work of our poet himself, the patience vanishes and Job strains the resources of the language to express his impatience. Yet we cannot blame him that his patience breaks down. The patience of any human being in his position would have broken down, and that the author of the present poem knew; only the hero of a folk-tale could be so inhumanly perfect. But, on the other hand, we cannot in reckoning the virtues of Job put patience among them. He was utterly truthful, high-hearted, sincere, keen of insight, firm of purpose, tender of conscience—these are the characteristics by which he lives for us; but among them is not patience. We do not adduce Shylock or Timon as examples of a forgiving spirit, though they had provocation enough; nor Hamlet as an example of a mind strong to bear any burden, though his burden was heavy enough; and so, too, we cannot speak of the patience of Job.

We have, therefore, here again a reference to the Job of tradition. Long after our present book of Job was written, the original legend, from which it had borrowed its hero, ran on in the hearts and on the lips of the people. So our western folk-tales

continue to be told to generation after generation of children, even after they have yielded material for poems and dramas. It is sometimes hard for us to tell whether a reference to Arthur is to the Arthur of the Mabinogion, of Sir Thomas Malory, or of Tennyson. But here, while the form of the reference (*ἡκούσατε*) does not prevent it¹ being scriptural, though it permits and even favors it being oral, its matter can leave no doubt that James was not thinking of the Job of his Sacred Books, but of the legendary figure whose story had been in his ears since childhood.

The next point to which I would draw attention is the attitude taken up towards the book of Job by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who died A. D. 428 or 429. Of his book upon Job we have only fragments preserved for us in a Latin version in the record of the acts of the Fifth General Council, that of Constantinople.² The record reads like that of a modern heresy trial. The memory of Theodore was accused of Nestorianism, and someone unknown collected passages from his writings in support of that accusation. At the fourth sitting of the council on May 12 or 13, A. D. 553, these passages, seventy-one in number, were read by the clerk. They mostly bore upon Nestorianism, but among them were some from this lost book upon Job. Even through their fragmentariness and the disguise of a painful Latin version the view of Theodore upon the book shines clearly.³ He held that in it we have an imitation of the Greek drama. This imitation is not in form, but in the way in which the author took his story, his material, and molded it to suit his own purposes. The Greek dramatist took one of the stories of the heroic age, modified it freely, if he found that necessary, equipped his characters with motives and speeches, and his drama was complete. Our author, smitten with ambition, wished to deal in the same way with the story of Job. He wished to display to the world a knowledge of Greek literature and Greek ideas, and to apply that knowledge to native material. Theodore's view is thus put shortly in one passage: "Et iste autem cum inuenisset et de beato Iob historiam maximam et claram, quæ in ore omnium similiter ferebatur non solum Israelitici generis, sed aliorum, quem etiam clariorem Dei testimonium faciebat quod

¹ Delitzsch (*Iob*, ii. Aufl., p. 7) feels driven to explain *ἡκούσατε* as pointing to *gottesdienstliche Verlesung des Buches*.

² Von Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, II. Band, Ss. 870 ff., ii. Auflage. Mansi's *Councils*, Vol. IX., cols. 200 ff.

³ Mansi, IX., cols. 223-225; Migne, LXVI., cols. 697, 8.

factum est ad prophetam, gloriam ex magnitudine causæ uolens suscipere, hanc scripturam composuit, non cogitans, quod multa differentia est, inter historiam iusti secundum diuinæ Scripturæ et simplicitatem et subtilitatem propositam, et inter uerba superflua, et ad probationem conficta.” Here we have the story of Job, in the mouths of all, Israelites and others; his fame, which had been made still greater by the mention of him by *the prophet*, evidently Ezekiel; that our author had taken this story and written our book in emulation, without considering that he was dealing in an unworthy spirit and manner with the story of a saint. In other sections Theodore notes various points in which he held that the author had perverted the original story. The interview between Satan and the Lord, the irreverence of Job’s language, especially his sudden outburst in his first speech, the attacks of his friends and more particularly of Elihu, all these things were an offense to him. But, apart from such details, the great point for us here is that Theodore witnesses to the existence in his time of a popular story of Job, in which Job was *iustus*, and of which our book is a perversion, doing grievous injury to Job’s memory. We can acknowledge that in this the critical instinct of the great master of the Antiochian school was right, without necessarily following him in his hypothesis of the aim of the author and of the influence upon him of the Greek drama. Something, perhaps, might be said for that also.

So far we have been groping in the dark. That the references contained in Ezekiel and in the epistle of James could not apply to our present book was certain. That Theodore of Mopsuestia had known in his native Syria a popular story of Job essentially different from that of our present book was equally certain; also that he had regarded this popular story as giving the real life of Job, while the biblical account was a perversion. But a couple of hundred years after the death of Theodore we step into full light. We learn the form in which this Syrian folk-tale reached Muhammad from his retelling of it in the Qur’ān.

In the Qur’ān⁴ there is mention of Job four times. In Sūra IV., vs. 161: “Verily We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and as We revealed to Abraham, and Ismaël, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and Jesus,

⁴In these quotations from the Qur’ān I give Rodwell’s version, the best I know in English; the other translations are made direct from the Arabic. This will explain the difference in the rendering of the proper names.

and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon; and to David gave We Psalms." In Sūra VI., vs, 84: "And We gave him [Abraham] Isaac and Jacob, and guided both aright; and We had before guided Noah; and among the descendants of Abraham, David and Solomon, and Job and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron: Thus do We recompense the righteous:" On this al-Bayḍāwī [d. A. H. 685] comments: "Ayyūb [or Job] was the son of Amūs, of the grandchildren of 'Ays, son of Ishāq."

But these are the merest mentions; the two other references give more detail. In Sūra XXI., vss. 83, 84: "And *remember* Job: When he cried to his Lord, 'Truly evil hath touched me: but Thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy.' So We heard him and lightened the burden of his woe; and We gave him back his family, and as many more with them—a mercy from Us, and a memorial for those who serve Us."

I shall now translate from al-Bayḍāwī's running commentary upon this all that is not purely philological and grammatical. "*But Thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy*;" he describes his Lord as possessing the utmost mercifulness after he had made mention of himself and of what called for that mercifulness, and that [*i. e.*, only mentioning those two things] contented him instead of putting forward a request, through courteousness in asking. He belonged to ar-Rūm [here probably meaning Syria] and was of the children of 'Ays b. Ishāq. God appointed him as prophet and multiplied his family and wealth; then He tried him with the destruction of his children through a house falling upon them, and through the departure of his wealth and through sickness in his body for eighteen years, or thirteen years, or seven years and seven months and seven hours. It is handed down by tradition that his wife was Mākhir bint Mīshā b. Yūsuf, or Raḥma bint Ifrā'im b. Yūsuf. She said to him one day, 'Suppose you were to call upon God?' Then he said, 'What was the duration of our state of ease?' And she said, 'Eighty years.' So he said, 'I am ashamed before God that I should call upon Him when the duration of my state of trial has not reached the duration of my being at ease.' *So We heard him and lightened the burden of his woe*; by healing him of his disease; *and We gave him back his family and as many more with them* through there being born to him double of what he had had; or his children were restored to life and grandsons were

born to him of them—a *mercy from Us and a memorial for those who serve Us*. A mercy upon Ayyūb and a reminder to others than him of those who serve Us that they should be patient like as he was patient, then they would be rewarded like as he was rewarded; or of Our having mercy upon those that serve Us and that We remember them with benefaction and forget them not.”

Again, there is a lengthened mention of Job in Sūra XXXVIII., vss. 40–44: “And remember Our servant Job when he cried to his Lord, ‘Satan hath laid on me disease and pain.’ ‘Stamp,’ said We, ‘with thy foot. This is a place to wash in, cool and a beverage.’ And We gave him back his family, and as many more with them, in Our mercy; and as a monition to men of understanding. And *We said*, ‘Take in thy hand a rod, strike with it, nor break thine oath.’ Verily, We found him patient! How excellent a servant! Verily he was one who turned to Us!”

In commenting on this, al-Bayḍāwī says that Ayyūb was son of ‘Aṣṣ b. Ishāq and that his wife was Līya bint Ya‘qūb. Then he goes on: “And that disease was laid upon him is ascribed to Satan either because God laid the disease upon him on account of what he did at Satan’s suggestion—as it is said that he was infatuated by the greatness of his wealth, or that one who was wronged sought aid of him and he aided him not, or that his herds were in the neighborhood of an unbelieving king and he flattered that king and the king did not make plundering expeditions against him, or because Satan asked a trial of Job’s patience, so Job’s expressing himself in this way was either a confession of sin or out of regard for good breeding; or because Satan made evil suggestions to Job’s followers until they cast him off and drove him out of their dwellings; or because he meant by the disease and pain what Satan kept suggesting to him in his sickness arising from the greatness of his trial and despair of God’s compassion, and kept inciting him to complaint. [All this is because al-Bayḍāwī could not understand how Satan could have power to do any injury to a prophet of God.] *Stamp with thy foot, i. e., strike the ground with thy foot. This is a place to wash in, cool and a beverage, i. e., so he struck the ground and there burst out a spring and it was said, This is a place to wash in, i. e., water in which you may wash and of which you may drink, so you will be cleansed within and without. And it is said that two springs burst out, a hot one and a cold one, and*

he washed in the hot one and drank of the other. *And We gave him back his family*, in that We brought them again together after their separation, or We restored them to life after their death. And it is said, We gave to him as many [other children], *and as many more with them*, so that he had double of what he had had, *in Our mercy*, on account of Our mercy towards him; *and as a monition to men of understanding*, and as a reminder to them that they may expect joy through patience and reliance upon God in that which besets them. *And We said, 'Take in thy hand a rod [rather a handful, or bundle], a small bundle of hay, and strike with it, nor break thine oath.'* It is handed down in tradition that his wife Liya bint Ya'qūb—and she is called also Raḥma bint Ifrā'im b. Yūsuf—went away for some purpose and delayed to return. So he swore that if he were healed he would strike her with an hundred blows; but God annulled his oath by this, and this method of annulling is an indulgence that remains with regard to punishments. [*I. e.*, this passage may be used to justify similar casuistical annulling of oaths.] *Verily, We found him patient!* in what befell him in himself, and in his people, and in his wealth. And his complaint to God concerning Satan was not a falling short in patience, for it, like longing for health and seeking healing, is not called impatience; and, besides, he said that out of fear lest Satan should tempt him and his people in the Faith. *How excellent a servant! Verily, he was one who turned to Us!* one who brought his burden to God."

Such, then, is the story of Job as it was told by Muḥammad, and as his telling of it was explained by the orthodox al-Bayḍāwī. The exegesis of the commentator, based on the exposition of the much less orthodox az-Zamakhsharī, is evidently sound; but we have to distinguish, of course, the additions which he makes to the jerky and allusive treatment of the legend by Muḥammad. Still, in text and comment, one thing is clear: there was no complaint on the part of Job. That is the point of the whole story; Job had been patient throughout. He had not even permitted himself to appeal directly to God for alleviation of his sufferings, but had contented himself with the most delicate suggestion by alluding to his condition and to the mercy of God, the Most Merciful. Further, it is curious to notice how the popular mind, being left in the dark, cast about to find some explanation of Job's sufferings, and found it, just like Job's friends, in sin on his part.

Evidently, our book of Job had either not been at work here or had utterly failed of its purpose. This illustrates anew how strange to Semitic thought the conception of that book must have been; the writer of it stands almost alone in the Old Testament, almost alone in the whole Semitic world.

It would be easy to multiply quotations from Muslim writers, all telling the story of Job in this way. But I shall give only one, though a very long one, which tells it in several ways, one of them being evidently derived, at first or second hand, from our book. It will be noticed how curiously astray this biblical version looks in the midst of the others, in spite of the evident care that has been given to trim it down to some measure of decency. Job does his roaring very gently and collapses at the rebuke of God in the most edifying fashion.

My quotation is taken from *The Book of the Stories of the Prophets*, by ath-Tha'labī, who died A. H. 427, corresponding to A. D. 1035, 1036. His book falls in a division of Arabic literature that may be compared, to a certain extent, with our history of revelation. Only it is a kind of history and a kind of revelation that would rejoice the heart of the "traditionalist." In it there is no shadow of development; the faith once delivered to Adam is the same as that preached by Muḥammad, and all the prophets who came in between, in long series, have been mere restorers and reformers with no new teaching. Thus all doctrine is conspicuous by its absence, and what we have is a series of articles giving the external incidents of the lives of these prophets; their teaching had been the teaching of al-Islām, and all knew what that was.

Such a prophet-reformer had Job been, and ath-Tha'labī, gathering together all that tells of him in the Qur'ān and in the "traditions of the learned," narrates his story as follows:⁵

A DISCOURSE IN MENTION OF THE PROPHET OF GOD AYYŪB AND OF HIS TRIALS.—UPON HIM BE PEACE!

God Most High has said: *And remember Our servant Ayyūb when he cried to his Lord*, etc. And He Most High has said: *And remember Ayyūb when he cried to his Lord, Truly evil hath touched me: but Thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy*. Wahb and Ka'b and others beside of the people of the Scriptures⁶ said: Ayyūb was a

⁵ Pp. 132-142 of the edition of Cairo, A. H. 1298. See, too, Job as a pattern of patience in the *Durra* of al-Ghazzālī, edit. of Gautier, p. 89 of Arabic text, 76 of translation.

⁶ Those who have access to the ancient religious books. Generally the phrase *People of the Scriptures*, or the *Books*, means the followers of a revealed religion. These, according

man of ar-Rūm. He was a tall man with a large head and curled hair, beautiful as to eyes and make, short of neck and thick in shanks and forearms. Upon his forehead he bore written, The Tried, the Patient. His father was Ayyūb b. Amūs b. Tārikh b. Rūm b. 'Aṣṣ b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm (Upon them be Peace!), and his mother was of the children of Lūṭ b. Hārān. And God had chosen him and made him a Prophet and laid the world at his command. All ath-Thaniya⁷ belonged to him, both its plain and its mountain land and what was in it. And he had of all kinds of wealth, of camels and cattle and sheep and asses, what none other than he had more abundantly as to equipment and number. And he had along with that five hundred yoke of oxen for plowing, followed by five hundred slaves, each with wife and children and wealth; and a she-ass carried the gear of each yoke of oxen and each she-ass had foals from two to more than five. And God had given him family and children, men and women; and he was compassionate to the poor, aiding widows and orphans, honoring the guest and advancing the traveler on his way. He was grateful for the favor of God Most High, rendering Him his duties; and he hindered Iblis, the enemy of God, from obtaining of him, through what he was involved in of the things of this world, that which he obtains of people of wealth, consisting of inadvertence and carelessness and occupation and forgetfulness concerning the command of God Most High. And there were with him three men who trusted in him and believed in him and knew his excellence; a man from the people of al-Yaman who was called Eliphaz (اليفن), and two men from the people of his own country, the one of them called Bildad (بلدد = مالك) and the other Zophar (ظافر), and they were elderly men.

Wahb said: Jibril (Upon him be Peace!) has a station before God the like of which none other of the Angels has in nearness and excellence; and it is Jibril who receives the Word. Then, whenever God Most High commends a creature⁸ Jibril receives that Word, then Mikā'il, then those that are round him of the Archangels and those that circle around the Empyrean Throne. So when that Word is diffused among the Archangels, benediction comes upon that creature from the people of the Heavens. And when the Angels of Heaven bless him the Word descends upon him in the blessing unto the Angels of Earth. And Iblis used not to be shut out from any part of the Heavens, but used to stand in them whenever he wished; and from thence he reached Adam when he made him go forth from the Garden.⁹ So he continued to

to the Muslim view, are the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabeans. Wahb and Ka'b were Jews of al-Yaman, who embraced Islam, and through whom seems to have passed most of the Jewish material that has been taken up in Muslim tradition. Ibn 'Abbās, the founder of Qur'ānic exegesis, was a pupil of Ka'b, but manipulated his stories freely. So far as we can judge, both Ka'b and Wahb were liars of quite astonishing capabilities. Ka'b died A. H. 32; Wahb, after A. H. 110.

⁷ We should probably read al-Bathaniya = **בִּשְׁן**. See Wetzstein's excursus in Delitzsch's *Commentary on Job*. Thaniya means, of course, a mountain pass.

⁸ I translate 'abd by creature; literally it is bond servant, slave.

⁹ Paradise; the Garden of Eden.

ascend thus into the Heavens until God Most High raised 'Isà¹⁰ (Upon him be Peace!) when he was excluded from four of the Heavens but remained in three. Then when God sent Muḥammad (Upon him be Blessing and Peace!) he was excluded from the three remaining Heavens. So he and his bands are now excluded from all the Heavens until the Day of Resurrection. *Save such as steal a hearing: and him do visible flames pursue.*¹¹ Thus is the story. Then Iblis heard the converse of the Angels in benediction upon Ayyūb—that was when God made mention of him and praised him—and envy and jealousy overtook him. And he ascended quickly until he had come up to the station in Heaven where he was wont to stop, and said, “O my God, I have considered the case of Thy creature Ayyūb and I find him a creature to whom Thou hast been gracious and he has been grateful to Thee; and Thou hast preserved him and he has praised Thee. And further Thou hast not tested him, neither by force nor by trial, and I maintain to Thee that if Thou molest him by trial he will verily renounce Thee and forget Thee.” Then said God Most High, “Depart unto him; I have given thee power over his wealth.” So the enemy of God dropped until he reached the earth. Thereupon he gathered the 'Ifrits and the most powerful of the Shayṭāns¹² and said to them, “What have ye of strength and knowledge? For I have received power over the wealth of Ayyūb and the passing away of wealth is the most oppressive misfortune and the temptation under which men are not patient.” Then said an 'Ifrit of the Shayṭāns, “I am gifted with strength such that if I will I can turn myself into a whirlwind of fire and burn up everything upon which I come.” So Iblis said to him, “Then go to the camels and burn them up along with their herdsmen.” So he departed towards the camels, and that was at the time when they put down their heads and ceased not feeding in their pastures. Then the people knew not when there suddenly burst from under the earth a whirlwind of fire in which blasts of hot poisonous wind were blowing, and none drew near to it but he was burnt up. And it ceased not burning the camels and their herdsmen until it came to the last of them. Then, when it had made an end with them, Iblis guised himself in the likeness of their herdsman, riding upon a herdsman's camel, and departed in the direction of Ayyūb and found him standing in prayer. And he said to him, “Ho, Ayyūb!” Ayyūb said, “At thy service.” And he said, “Dost thou know what thy Lord Whom thou hast chosen and served has done with thy camels, and their herdsmen?” Said Ayyūb, “Lo! they are His wealth; He but lent them to me and is worthier of them. If He will to leave them and if He will to take them, I find it right and my soul approves. I and my wealth are to pass away and cease.” Then said Iblis to him, “And if thy Lord hath sent to them a fire from heaven, and it have burned them all, and men remain

¹⁰ Jesus.

¹¹ Qur'an XV., 18. The *visible flames* are shooting stars thrown by the Angel sentinel at eavesdropping Jinn.

¹² The Shayṭāns are the rebellious Jinn; the 'Ifrits malignant, evil Jinn. See generally Lane, *1001 Nights*, Vol. I., pp. 26 f.

confounded, standing by them and marveling at them? And of these men are some who say, 'Ayyūb was not serving aught and he was in naught but delusion.' And there are who say, 'If the God of Ayyūb were able to do aught, verily He had hindered that the cattle of His favorite should be burned.' And of them are some who say, 'But it is He who has done what has been done, and his enemy gloats over him and his friend is grieved on account of him.' Then said Ayyūb, "Praise belongeth unto God Who gifted me and when He willed, took from me. Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked do I return to the grave and naked am I gathered to my Lord. It befitteth thee not to rejoice when God lendeth to thee, nor to complain when He taketh His loan again; He has an absolute right to thee and to what He gave thee. If God had known good in thee, O creature! He had taken thy soul along with these souls, and made thee a martyr along with these martyrs.¹³ But He knew evil in thee, and left thee, and separated thee from trial like as the tares are separated from the pure wheat."

Then returned Iblis to his fellows, disappointed and abased, and said to them, "What strength is with you? Lo, I have not cut his heart!" Then said an 'Ifrit, one of the most powerful of them, "With me is such strength that if I will, I can shout with a cry; no one that breathes can hear it but his very life will depart."¹⁴ Iblis said to him, "Then go to the sheep and their keepers." And he departed in the direction of the sheep and their keepers until, when he was in their midst, he shouted with a cry at which the sheep all died and their keepers died. Then Iblis went out in the form of the overseer of the shepherds and came to Ayyūb who was standing in prayer, and said to him according to his former saying. But Ayyūb replied to him as he had replied before. Then Iblis returned unto his fellows and said, "What strength is with you? Lo! I have not cut the heart of Ayyūb." An 'Ifrit said, one of the most powerful of them, "With me there is such strength that, if I will, I can turn myself into a tempestuous wind; whatsoever it falls upon is dried up and perishes, until naught of it remains." Iblis said to him, "Then go to the yokes of plowing oxen and to the plowed land." So he departed in their direction until he drew near to the yokes of oxen and stood in the midst of the plowed land, and their young were feeding at will. Then none knew when a tempestuous wind blew and shriveled up and destroyed everything of that, until it was as though it had not been. Thereupon Iblis went out in the likeness of the overseer of the plowed land and came to Ayyūb, and he was standing in prayer. And he said to him according to his former saying and Ayyūb answered him according to his former answer. Then Iblis fell to smiting his wealth, bit by bit, until he came unto the last. So is the story. But Ayyūb, whenever there reached him tidings of the destruction of aught of his wealth, praised God and made beautiful His laud and was content

¹³ Muslims who die by burning are reckoned as martyrs and have the privileges of martyrdom. See Lane, *Lexicon*, s. *shahīd*, and *1001 Nights*, Vol. I., p. 219.

¹⁴ Compare the trumpet blast at the Last Day which shall kill all creatures.

with destiny and accustomed his soul through patience to trial until there was not left to him any wealth. Then, when Iblis saw that his wealth was gone and that he had not obtained from him aught and that he did not succeed in any of his doings, it disquieted him. And he ascended in haste and stopped at the station where he was wont to stop, and said, "O my God! lo! Ayyūb knoweth that so long as Thou permittest him to enjoy his soul and his children Thou wilt give him wealth. Wilt Thou, then, give me power over his children? For they are the temptation that leads astray and goes to the mark; against it the hearts of men cannot stand up and against it their patience is not strong." Then said God Most High to him, "Depart; I have given thee power over his children." So the enemy of God dropped until he came to the sons of Ayyūb, the Prophet of God, and they were in their palace. He ceased not shaking until the palace threatened to fall from its columns. Then one part of the columns came to push against the other, through his letting the palace slip down. And he pelted the sons of Ayyūb with pieces of wood and stones until he mutilated them with every kind of mutilation. Then he lifted the palace with them and overturned it and they were thrown over, head downwards. Then Iblis departed to Ayyūb in the form of the teacher who was wont to teach them wisdom, and he was broken of head and face with blood flowing from his brain. And he narrated to him what had happened and said to him, "O Ayyūb! if thou wast to see thy sons how they have been tormented, and how the palace is overturned with them and they are thrown head downwards with their blood and brains flowing from their nostrils and their lips, and if thou wast to see how their bellies are split and their entrails scattered, verily thy heart would cease to beat!" And he stayed not saying and repeating this until Ayyūb grew weak on account of him, and wept, and took a handful of earth and put it upon his head. Then Iblis seized the opportunity given by Ayyūb and ascended hastening and rejoicing in what had fallen from Ayyūb of impatience. But Ayyūb delayed not to return to the Faith and asked forgiveness and was grateful. Then those Angels that accompanied him ascended with his petition for forgiveness and with his repentance, and came up with Iblis and reached God before him.—And God is all-knowing concerning what happens.—So Iblis stood disappointed and downcast. Then he said, "O my God! Ayyūb knows that so long as Thou permittest him to enjoy his life, Thou wilt restore to him wealth and children; and that makes the jeopardy of his wealth and children but a slight matter to him. Wilt Thou, then, give me power over his life and his body? For I maintain to Thee that if Thou try him in his body, he will verily forget Thee, and be unbelieving towards Thee, and will deny Thy bounty." Then said Allāh Most High, "Depart; I have given thee power over his body, but thou shalt have no power over his tongue or heart, nor over his reason." And He, by Allāh! knew best concerning Ayyūb that He did not give Iblis power over him except as a grace that He might increase to him the recompense and make him an example to the patient and an object of remembrance to

creatures in all trial, that they might take example from him in patience and hope of recompense. Then the enemy of God dropped quickly and found Ayyūb worshipping. And before he lifted his head he came to him from the side of the earth where his face was and blew into his nostrils a blast by which his body turned white and was disquieted. Then there came out upon him from crown to foot warts like sheep tails and an itching befell him which he could not overcome and against which he could not refrain from scratching. So he scratched with his nails until they all fell out. Then he scratched them with pieces of rough hair-cloth until he cut them; then with earthenware and rough stones. And he ceased not scratching them until his flesh fell off and he was cut and changed and smelt evilly. Then the people of the town thrust him out and put him on a rubbish heap and made over him a hut, and all God's creatures abandoned him save only his wife, Raḥma bint Ifrā'im b. Yūsuf b. Ya'qūb (Upon them be Peace!). She kept repeatedly coming to him with what would help him, and honoring him.

Then when his three companions saw how God had tried him they suspected him and abandoned him yet did not leave the Faith he preached. But when his trial grew long, they set out and came to him and blamed him and said to him, "Repent from the sin for which thou art punished." So is the story. And there was present with them a youth, little of years, and he had trusted him and believed in him; so he said, "O Elders! ye have spoken, and ye are more worthy to speak on account of your years, but ye have left out of that which has been said something better than what ye have said, and from the opinion something sounder than what ye have opined, and from the affair something more beautiful than what ye have arranged; and there belongs to Ayyūb against you some right and consideration more excellent than that which ye have rendered. Then know ye not, O Elders! the right of him whom ye belittle and the inviolability of him whom ye injure, of the man whom ye abuse and suspect? Know ye not that Ayyūb is the Prophet of God and His beloved and His elect and His chosen one of the people of the earth in this very day? Then, lo ye! ye know not and God Most High has not imparted to you that He is displeased with aught of Ayyūb's affair since He gave him that which He gave him up to this very day. And ye know not that He has diminished from him aught of the honor wherewith He honored him nor that Ayyūb has been other than true in all the time that ye have companied with him until this very day. And if it is the trial that has discredited him with you and has degraded him in your regards, ye know that God Most High tries His Prophets and Friends and Martyrs and Saints and that their trial is no indication that He is displeased with them, nor does it mean that they are opposing themselves to Him; but it is an honor and good bestowed upon them. And even though Ayyūb held no such position as this with regard to God and ye were not his brethren by way of companionship,¹⁵ it is not

¹⁵ Apparently it means that they were the companions (Aṣḥāb) of Ayyūb as a Prophet in the technical sense in which companions of Muḥammad are spoken of, that is, those contemporaries who were in immediate intercourse with him as believers.

seemly for the wise man that he should censure his brother in time of trial; and he should not reproach him or abuse him with that which he knows not while he is distressed and grieved. But he should have compassion upon him and weep with him and ask of God pardon for him and grieve for his grieving and guide him to the right course in his affairs. There is no wise or rightly guided man who is ignorant of this; then God, God remember ye! O ye Elders! of the might of God and of His glory and of the thought of death ye have that which lames your tongues and breaks your hearts. Know ye not that God has servants whom His dread brings to silence though they stammer not nor are they dumb; and that among them are eloquent men, generous, clear-speaking, gifted, knowers of God and His workers? But when they think upon the might of God their tongues are lamed and their skin creeps and their hearts are broken and their reason bewildered—a tribute to the mightiness of God Most High and to His power and glory. Then, whenever they recover they go emulously upon their way to God Most High with pure, good deeds, reckoning themselves among evil sinners, although they are free from ill-doing. And they reckon themselves with those that are remiss and that fall short, although they are verily acute and powerful. But they consider not as much for God that which is much, and are not well pleased with a little for Him; they embolden not themselves against Him with actions but they are fearful and terrified, lowly and humble.”

Then said Ayyūb: “Lo! God Most High soweth wisdom by His mercy in the heart of the believer whether he be great or small. Then, when it springs up in the heart, God Most High makes it manifest upon the tongue; and wisdom is not from the presence of age or hoariness, nor from length of experience. But when God hath made a creature wise in youth, his position with the wise doth not fail since they see the light of favor from God Most High upon him.”

Then Ayyūb approached the three and said: “Ye have come unto me wrathful; ye have feared before ye were made afraid and ye have wept before ye were beaten. How had it been with you, had I said to you: ‘Give alms for me of your wealth, perhaps God will save me, and offer for me an offering, perhaps God will accept it and be pleased with me’? But, lo ye! ye marvel at yourselves and ye think that ye are preserved by your good deeds; so ye desire for yourselves that which is pleasing and show yourselves proud. But if ye considered what is betwixt you and your Lord, and spoke the truth, ye would verily find that ye have faults which God hath veiled upon you by the forgiveness with which He hath clothed you. But as for me, in time gone by men honored me, and my speech was listened to and my truth known and I obtained my right of my adversary. And this day I come and there is neither counsel nor speech for me with you, but ye are this day more grievous against me than that which has come upon me.”

Then he turned from them and approached his Lord, seeking help and drawing nigh unto Him. And he said: “My Lord! wherefore hast

Thou created me? Would that, since Thou abhorrest me, Thou hadst not created me! would that I were a rag¹⁶ that my mother had thrown away! Or would that I knew the sin of which I have been guilty and the deed which I have done that Thou hast turned Thy generous face from me! Or that Thou wouldst slay me and join me to my fathers! for death is fairer to me, O my God! Have I not been to the stranger an abode, and to the needy repose, and to the orphan a guardian, and to the widow a protector? My God! I am a creature abased; if Thou dealest kindly with me, the grace is Thine; and if Thou dealest evilly, in Thy hand is my punishment. Thou hast made me a target for trial, and for temptation a butt. A trial has befallen me; if Thou hadst given it rule over a camel, it would have been too weak to bear it; Then how can my weakness bear it, my God? My fingers fall in pieces and I cannot lift a morsel of food except with my two hands together, and they reach not my mouth save with effort from me. My God! one by one fall the inner parts of my mouth and the flesh of my head; there is nothing stopping the way between my ears, but the one of them is seen from the other; and my brain flows out of my mouth. My God! the hair of my eyes falls away as though my face were burned with fire, and the pupils of my eyes hang down upon my cheeks. And my tongue swells until it fills my mouth; and food enters it not but it chokes me; and my lips swell until the upper presses against my nose and the lower against my chin. And my bowels fall in pieces within me; food enters not but it comes out as it enters; I feel it not and it benefits me not. And the strength of my feet is gone; they are as though they had withered, and I am not able to bear them. And my wealth is gone; I have fallen to asking with my hand, and there feeds me with a single morsel he whom I was nourishing—so he bestows it upon me and reproaches me. My God! my children have perished; if one of them had remained he would have aided me against my trial and availed for me. My people are weary of me; my relatives are disobedient to me; my acquaintances show antipathy to me; my friend is averse to me; and my companions pass me by. My claims are denied and my good deeds are forgotten; I cry out for help and they succor me not; I excuse myself and they excuse me not. I summon my servant and he answereth me not; I entreat my maid servant and she has no compassion on me. And it is Thy decree that has abased me, and made me vile, and scorned me, and set me up for derision; and it is Thy power that has made me sick and has wasted my body. But if my Lord would take away the awe that is in my breast and loose my tongue, I would speak in the fullness of my mouth. And if it were fitting for the creature to contend for himself, I would have hope that He would heal me thereat of that which is in me. But He has cast me away and separated Himself from me; He sees me but I see Him not; He hears me but I hear Him not; He looks not unto me so as to have pity on me; He draws not near to me and draws me not near to Him so that I might speak in my guiltiness and defend myself.”

¹⁶ For a more exact rendering, see Lane, *s. v. hida*.

Then, when Ayyūb had said that—and his companions were with him—a cloud overshadowed them and the companions thought that it was punishment. And then was proclaimed: “O Ayyūb! lo! God Most High speaketh unto thee. Ho! I have drawn near to thee and have not ceased to be close to thee; so arise and embolden thyself in thy excuse, and speak in thy guiltiness, and defend thyself, and gird on thee thy tunic, and arise as the mighty man arises; for it is not fitting that there should contend with Me except a mighty man, My like. And it is not fitting that there should contend with Me except one who can put a nose rein¹⁷ in the mouth of the lion and kids in the mouth of the ‘Anqā¹⁸ and flesh in the mouth of the Dragon, who can measure a measure of fire and mete a weight of wind and bind the vehemence of the sun and lead back yesterday. Verily, thy soul has made thee wish for a thing that cannot be attained with the like of thy strength, and if, when thy soul made thee wish for that and summoned thee to it, thou hadst remembered what manner of desire it was desiring, it had been well for thee. Wouldst thou in thy weakness vie with Me or in thy error contend with Me or in thy fault argue with Me? Where wast thou with Me in the day when I formed the earth and set it on its foundation? Knowest thou with what measure I measured it or wast thou passing by its borders with Me? Or dost thou know what is beyond its corners and upon what I set its sides? In obedience to thee does the water bear up the earth or in thy wisdom is the water upon the earth as a covering? Where wast thou with Me on the day when I raised the heaven as a roof in the air without cords holding it and pillars carrying it not underneath? Is it attained by thy wisdom that its stars pursue their course and journey on, and is it by thy command that its day and its night interchange? Where wast thou with Me on the day when I filled the seas and caused the rivers to burst forth? Did thy power bind the waves of the seas in their borders or does thy power open the wombs when they have reached their term? Where wast thou with Me on the day when I formed the water upon the earth and set up the peaks of the mountains? Art thou able to carry them or dost thou know what is the weight of that which is in them? Where is the water which I made to descend from heaven? Dost thou know how many a land I have destroyed and how many a drop I have counted and divided the showers? Or does thy power arouse the clouds and scatter the water? Dost thou know what are the voices of the thunder and from what thing is the flame of the lightning? Hast thou seen the depth of the sea and dost thou know what is beyond the air? Or dost thou know where is the treasury of the day in the night and where the path of light, and in what dialect the trees converse and where is the treasury of the wind and where the mountains of hail? Or dost thou know Who formed reason in the breasts of men and opened ears and eyes? And Who subdued the Angels to His rule and Who conquered

¹⁷ So in the text, but there seems to be some confusion or corruption. I am unable to suggest a correction. See, however, Lane, *Lexicon*, p. 1248 b, middle of column.

¹⁸ The same as the Rūkh, the Roc of our childhood. See Lane, *1001 Nights*, III., pp. 85 ff.

the mighty ones by His own might, and divides sustenance to beasts and to men by His wisdom? And Who divides to the lions their sustenance and makes the birds to know their food and inclines them to their chicks? And Who freed the wild animals from servitude and made their dwellings in the open field?—they delight not in voices and fear not rulers. Is it by thy wisdom that their mothers incline to them and bring forth food for them from their breasts, and prefer life for them rather than for themselves? Or by thy wisdom does the eagle see his distant prey and is, in the morning, in the tracts of air? Where wast thou on the day that I created al-Yahmūt—his place is where the dust ceases—and al-Lūtiyā?¹⁹—they two bear the mountains and cities and inhabited lands, their tusks are like long fir trees and their heads like mountains and the fibers of their thighs are like pillars of brass. Didst thou fill their skins with flesh and didst thou fill their heads with brains? Hadst thou any share in the forming of them or hadst thou part in the strength that overcame them or is it attainable by thy strength that thou shouldst set thy hands upon their heads or shouldst lie in wait by the way to restrain them and turn them aside from their strength? Where wast thou in the day when I formed the Dragon? His food is in the sea and his dwelling in the air; his eyes flash fire; his nostrils pour forth smoke; his ears are like the bow of the clouds, there pours forth from them flame, as though he were a whirling wind-column of dust; his belly burns and his breath flames and his foam is hot coals like unto rocks; it is as though the clash of his teeth were sounds of thunder and the glance of his eye were the flashing of lightning; armies pass him by while he is lying; nothing terrifies him, in him there is no joint; masses of iron with him are as straw and brass with him as threads; he fears not the bowman and dreads not the fall of rocks upon his body; he destroys all that by which he passes. Wilt thou take him in thy snare or set a curb in his jaw? Canst thou number his life or dost thou know his term? Hast thou learned his food or dost thou know what he has ravaged in the earth, and what he will ravage in that which remains to him of his life? Or canst thou endure his anger when he is angry or command him and he will obey thee?—Blessed is God, the best of Makers!”

Then said Ayyūb (Upon him be Peace!): “I am too little for this thing which has descended upon me. Would that the earth were split for me that so I might pass away! Would that I had not spoken a thing to anger my Lord when trial gathered upon me! My God! Thou hast made me as an enemy to Thee, but Thou knowest me and knowest my honesty. And I know that all that of which Thou hast spoken is the work of Thy hands and the disposal of Thy wisdom, and mightier yet

¹⁹ By change in the diacritical points these could become *Bahamūth* and *Liwyathā*, forms fairly near **בהמות** and **לוריתן**. But the forms in Arabic appear always as here. They are names of the great fish on the back of which, in Muslim cosmogony, the earth rests. To be strictly accurate, its *Ism* is *Lūtiyā*, its *Kunya* is *Balhūt*, and its *Laqab* is *Yahmūt*! See p. 4 of the book from which this account of Job is translated. Probably Ka'b, Wabb, and Ibn 'Abbās have to bear the responsibility for this among them. Yet Wabb here seems to regard them as two separate creatures.

than this, if Thou didst will it. I know that naught baffles Thee; that the concealed is not concealed from Thee and that the distant is not distant for Thee. Who is this that thinks that he can secrete from Thee a secret?—but Thou knowest what thoughts enter hearts. And I have learned from Thee in this my trial that which I knew not, and I fear that there may be a greater thing than what I was fearing. I was only hearing Thy voice but now there is seeing with the eye. I spoke, when I spoke, only that Thou mightest exculpate me; and I keep silence, when I keep silence, that Thou mayest have mercy upon me. A word—but what a word!—has passed upon my tongue and I will not again repeat it. I have laid my hand upon my mouth and bitten my tongue; I have joined my cheek to the dust and hidden my face in it for my abasement; and I keep silence what time my sin makes me keep silence. Then, forgive me what I said and I shall not again do aught at which Thou wouldst be displeased in me.”

Then said God Most High: “O Ayyūb! My sentence has been carried out on thee and My compassion has outstripped My anger. When thou sinnedst I forgave thee what thou didst say and I have had compassion on thee and have given thee back thy family and thy wealth and as many more with them, that thou mayest be to them that come after thee a sign and an example for the people of affliction and a consolation to those who are patient. *Then stamp with thy foot; this is a place to wash in, cool and a beverage*, in it is healing. And offer an offering for thy companions and ask pardon for them; for they have been rebellious against Me in regard to thee.”

Then he stamped with his foot, and there burst forth for him a spring, and he entered into it and drank, and God caused to pass from him what was in him of his trial. Then he came forth and sat, and his wife came up and kept seeking him in his lair and found him not. So she became confounded, like one distraught, and passed by him and said, “O servant of God! hast thou knowledge of him who was tried of God, who was here?” Then he said to her, “Wouldst thou know him when thou hadst seen him?” She said, “Yes, and how should I not know him?” Then he smiled and said, “Lo, I am he!” And she knew him when he laughed, and she embraced him.

Said Ibn ‘Abbās: By Him in Whose hand my soul is, she did not cease embracing him until there had come to them all that had been theirs, of wealth and children. And that is the meaning of Him Most High: “*And remember Ayyūb when he cried unto his Lord, Truly evil has touched me*,” with the rest of the verse. And the learned disagree as to the time of his crying out thus, and as to the duration of his trial and the cause on account of which he said, *Evil has touched me*. There narrated to us the Imām Abū-l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Sahl, dictating in the mouth of Rabi’ I, in the year 384: There related unto us²⁰

²⁰ In this ‘chain each *There related unto us*, with what follows it, is to be understood as spoken by the traditionist whose name immediately precedes. It is the regular formula used by Muslims in authenticating a tradition.

Abū Ṭālib 'Umar b. ar-Rabī' b. Sulaymān, the timber merchant in Miṣr : There related unto us Yaḥyā b. Ayyūb, the dealer in fodder : There related unto us Sa'īd b. Abū Maryam : There related unto us Nafi' b. Yazid from 'Uqayl from Ibn Shihāb from Anas b. Mālik : He said : There said the Apostle of God (May God be gracious unto him and give him Peace!) : Ayyūb remained in his trial eighteen years. Then near and far cast him off except two men of his brethren who were wont to come to him morning and evening. And one of them said to his fellow, "By Allāh, Ayyūb has sinned a sin which none of men has sinned." His fellow said to him, "Whence knowest thou that?" He said, "During the eighteen years that he has been tried, God has not had compassion on him or dispelled that in which he is." Then when they came to Ayyūb in the evening, the man rested not until he had told that to him. But Ayyūb said, "I know not what ye two are saying, but God knows that whenever I pass by two men disputing together and using the name of God Most High, I return to my house and turn away from them through dislike that they should use the name of God Most High except in truth." So is the story. And he was wont to go out for his need ; then, when he had done his need, his wife took him by the hand till he had returned. But one day he made her wait. And that was because God Most High revealed to Ayyūb in his place, *Stamp with thy foot*, with the rest of the verse. Then she thought him slow and came to see what was his affair. And God Most High had caused to pass from him all that was upon him of his trial, and he was the handsomest that was. And when she saw him she said to him, "Hast thou seen the Prophet of God, who is in trial?" He said, "Lo, I am he!"

And he had two threshing floors, a threshing floor for wheat and a threshing floor for barley. And God Most High sent two clouds ; and when the one of them was over the threshing floor of wheat, it poured out gold into it until it ran over, and the other poured out silver into the threshing floor of barley until it ran over.

And it is handed down in a tradition that God Most High rained upon him locusts of gold, and he fell to gathering some of them into his robe. Then He proclaimed to him, "O Ayyūb! do I not suffice thee in the stead of what thou seest?" He said, "Yea, O my Lord! but I am dependent on Thy bounty and sustenance and compassion, and who can be satiated of Thy favor?"

And al-Ḥasan said : Ayyūb (Upon him be Peace!) was cast out upon a rubbish heap in a dunghill of the Sons of Isrā'il for seven years and some months, and crawling things frequented him.

And Wahb said : It was not an itching (*or* gangrene) that was in Ayyūb ; there only came out of him something like a woman's teat ; then it would burst.

Al-Ḥasan said : And there remained to him no wealth or children or friend and not one drew near him except Raḥma, his wife. She was patient along with him, serving him and bringing him food and praising God with him when he praised Him. And Ayyūb, in spite of the condition

he was in, without intermission spoke of God Most High and glorified Him and was patient under that with which God was trying him. Then Iblis, the enemy of God, in complaint at the patience of Ayyūb, cried with a cry that gathered his bands from the quarters of the earth. And when they had come together unto him, they said to him, "What is thy need?" He said, "This creature hath worn me out. I asked my Lord to give me power over his wealth and his children, and I left to him neither wealth nor children, but that did not increase in him aught but patience and glorifying of God. Then I had power over his body and I left him sore ulcered, cast away upon a rubbish heap, approached by none except his wife. But I have been disgraced with my Lord, and I seek aid of you, that ye may aid me against him." Then they said to him, "Where is thy guile and where thy knowledge by which thou didst destroy him that is gone?"²¹ He said, "Vain is all that with Ayyūb, so counsel ye me!" They said, "We will counsel thee with that which thou gavest to Adam when thou sentest him forth of the Garden. Whence didst thou come to him?" He said, "From the side of his wife." Then they said, "Then thy affair with Ayyūb is from the side of his wife; for he cannot disobey her and none draws near to him except she." He said, "Ye have hit the mark." Then he departed and came to the wife of Ayyūb; and she was seeking alms. And he presented himself to her in the form of a man and said, "Where is thy husband, O handmaid of God?" And she said, "It is he who scratches his sores and in whose body crawling things frequent." Then when he heard her speak he longed that it should be a speech of complaint, and tempted her, and reminded her of what she had been in of pleasantness and wealth, and of the beauty and youthfulness of Ayyūb, and of what on that day he was in of evils and that these would never be parted from him. So said Al-Ḥasan. Then she cried out, and when she cried out, he knew that she was complaining, and he brought her a kid and said to her, "Verily, let Ayyūb sacrifice this to me and he will recover." So he said; but she went her way, crying out, and said, "O Ayyūb! how long shall thy Lord punish thee and not give thee rest? Where is the wealth, where the cattle, where the children, where the friends? Where is thy beautiful robe? It has been changed and became like ashes. And where thy beautiful body? It has been tried and worms frequent in it. Sacrifice this kid and find rest." Then Ayyūb said to her, "The enemy of God came to thee, and put thoughts into thee, and thou didst agree with him. Woe to thee! Hast thou considered that for which thou weepest and in which we were, of wealth and children and health; who graciously bestowed it on us?" She said, "God." He said, "And how long did He allow us to enjoy it?" She said, "Eighty years." He said, "And since how long has God tried us with this trial?" She said, "Seven years." He said, "Woe to thee! By Allāh! thou art not just nor hast thou behaved justly to thy Lord. Shouldst thou not be patient eighty years in this trial with which our Lord has tried us since we were in prosperity so long? By Allāh! if He

²¹ Apparently Adam.

heal me I shall verily scourge thee with a hundred scourgings because thou wouldst have me sacrifice to another than God Most High. Thy meat and thy drink which thou bringest me are unlawful to me; I will not taste of aught that thou bringest me since thou hast said this. So get thee from me; I will not see thee." And he drove her away and she went. Then when Ayyūb saw that he had driven away his wife, and that there was with him neither meat nor drink nor friend, he prostrated himself to God in worship. And he said, "*My Lord, truly evil hath touched me.*" Thereupon he rendered the affair unto his Lord and was resigned. And he said, "*But Thou art the most merciful of those that show mercy.*" Then it was said to him, "Lift up thy head; an answer has been sent thee. *Stamp with thy foot,*" with the rest of the verse. So he stamped with his foot, and a spring of water burst forth, and he washed. And there did not remain any external thing of his disease, but its trace fell away, and God caused to pass from him all pain and disease and all ailment, and his youth returned to him and his beauty fairer than what it was and more excellent than what had gone. Then lo! he stamped with his foot, and there burst forth another spring, and he drank of it, and there remained not within him any disease but it came forth, and he stood up sound and clothed with a full, fair dress. So is the story. Then he fell to turning to the right and to the left and he saw not aught of that which had been his, of people and of children and of wealth, but God Most High had doubled it. And he went forth and took seat in a lofty place. Thereupon, lo! his wife said within herself, "Consider now; if he have driven me away, who will feed him? Shall I abandon him that he die of hunger and thirst and the wild beasts eat him? By Allāh! I will return to him." Then she returned but did not see the rubbish heap, and the place as she had known it before was changed. So she fell to wondering about where the rubbish heap had been and weeping; and Ayyūb was watching her. So is the story. But she dreaded him in the full, fair dress and did not go near to him or ask him. So Ayyūb sent to her and summoned her and said to her, "What dost thou seek, O handmaid of God?" She said, "I seek that tried one who was abandoned on this rubbish heap. I know not whether he has perished or what has been done with him." Then said Ayyūb (Upon him be Peace!), "What was he to thee?" And she wept and said, "My husband. And hast thou seen him?" He said, "And wouldst thou know him if thou sawest him?" She said, "And should he be concealed from me?" Then she began to gaze at him—and she was in awe of him—and said, "Lo! he was the likeliest to thee of God's creation when he was in sound health." He said, "I am Ayyūb. Thou wouldst have me sacrifice to Iblis; but I obeyed God and disobeyed Satan, and He restored unto me what thou seest."

And Ka'b said: Ayyūb was seven years in his trial. But Wahb said: He abode in that trial three years, not a day more. And when Ayyūb overcame Iblis (God curse him!), and Iblis could not do aught with him, he threw himself in the way of his wife in a guise which was

not like to the guise of the Sons of Adam, in might and bulk and beauty. And he was on a steed, not of the steeds of mankind; it had might and comeliness and beauty. Then he said unto her, "Thou art the wife of Ayyüb, the Tried?" She said, "Yes." He said, "And dost thou know me?" She said, "No." He said, "I am the God of the earth; and I am he who hath wrought with thy husband what I have wrought. And that was because he served the God of heaven and left me and angered me. But if he will prostrate himself unto me with but one prostration, I will restore unto him what was yours, of wealth and children; for they are with me." Then he showed her them in the hollow of the Wädý where he had met her.

Wahb said: And I have heard that he said to her, "If thy husband eat food over which the name of God has not been pronounced, he will be healed of the affliction in which he is"—but God knows best. And the Enemy of God wished to approach him through her. And I have read in some of the Books²² that Iblis said to Raḥma, "And if thou wilt, prostrate thyself to me with but one prostration that I may restore to thee the children and the wealth and heal thy husband." Then she returned to Ayyüb and told him what he had said to her and what he wished. And he said, "Verily! the Enemy of God wished to tempt thee from thy faith." Thereupon Ayyüb swore, if God healed him, to beat her with a hundred scourgings. And it was then that he said, "*Evil hath touched me*"; because that Iblis has coveted that my wife should prostrate herself to him, and has summoned her and me to Unbelief." So is the story. Thereupon God Most High had compassion upon Raḥma, the wife of Ayyüb, for her patience along with him in his trial, and relieved her, yet sought to keep sacred the oath of Ayyüb. So He commanded that he should take a bundle of branches, as many as a hundred light slender stalks, and beat her with one blow; as He Most High has said, *Take in thine hand a rod and strike with it, nor break thine oath*, with the rest of the verse.

And the wife of Ayyüb had been laboring for gain and working for people and bringing him his food. Then when his trial grew long, and people wearied of her, and no one wished to employ her, she begged one day for something to give him to eat but did not get anything. So she cut away a lock²³ from her head and sold it for a cake of bread and brought it to him. Then he said to her, "Where is thy lock?" And she told him; and on that he said, "*Evil hath touched me*."

And it is said that he said so only when the worms attacked his heart and tongue, and he dreaded that he might be rendered incapable of pronouncing the name of God and of thought. And it is said that he said so only when a worm fell from his thigh, and he took it and put it back in its place and said to it, "Eat, for God hath made me thy food." Then it bit him such a bite that his pain increased over all that he had endured from the bites of the worms.

²² Is this simple lying or is it in some Targum or Midrash?

²³ *Qarn*. But?

And 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar said: Ayyūb had two brethren and they came to him but stayed at a distance from him; for they were not able to draw near him on account of his evil stench. Then one of them said to his fellow, "If God had known aught good in Ayyūb, he had not tried him as thou seest." And Ayyūb never heard aught that was more harsh against him than that saying; nor was he distressed by aught that befell him as he was distressed by that saying. On that he said, "*Evil hath touched me.*" Thereafter he said, "O God! if Thou knowest that I have never passed a night satisfied with food while I knew anywhere one anhungered, then acknowledge me to be a speaker of truth." Then He acknowledged him; and those two were listening. Thereupon he said, "O God! if Thou knowest that I have never used a shirt while I knew that there was anywhere one who was naked, then acknowledge me to be a speaker of truth." And He acknowledged him; and those two were listening. Then he fell down and worshiped God.

And it is said that the sentence, *Evil hath touched me*, refers to the exulting of enemies. That is shown by the tradition that people said to him after he had been restored, "What was most grievous to thee in thy Trial?" and that he said, "The exulting of enemies." And one of them has recited to the same effect:

"All misfortunes from time to time befall youth; then they are made light of, save the exulting of the envious.

Lo! the days of misfortunes are accomplished, but the exulting of enemies is ever in the path."

Al-Junayd said: In this verse [Qur. XXI., 83; see p. . .] he exhibited to Him poverty of asking, so that He should bestow upon him with munificence in His gift. And that is the saying of Him Most High, "*And We lightened the burden of his woe and We gave him back his family,*" with the rest of the verse. And the learned differ as to how that was. Some say that after God had tried Ayyūb in this world, He gave him a similar family, but that those who had perished were not restored to him in this world. He only promised Ayyūb that He would give them in the world to come. And Wahb said that he had seven daughters and three sons.²⁴ But others said, "Nay! God Most High restored them to him themselves and gave to him his family and as many as they with them." This is the saying of Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās and Qatāda and Ka'b. They say that God Most High restored them to life and gave him as many again as they; and this saying is likeliest to the plain sense of the verse.

And it is mentioned that the life of Ayyūb was ninety-three years and that he appointed his son Ḥawmāl to teach the people after his death;²⁵

²⁴ Contrast Job, 42:13. But there is probably some confusion at this point, as the text is grammatically impossible. It runs: *Kāna lahu sab'u banātin wa-thalāthu banīna.*

²⁵ I have translated this somewhat generally, but still faithfully. A more exact rendering would involve a lengthy explanation dealing with a point of constitutional law. Incidentally it proves that the author was a Shi'ite.

and that God sent as prophet after him Bishr b. Ayyūb and named him Dhū-l-Kifl and commanded him to pray to His Unity; and that he remained in ash-Shām all his life until he died, and that the extent of his life was ninety-five years; and that he appointed as teacher after him his son 'Abdān; and that God sent after him Shu'ayb (Peace be upon him!).

And God knows best.²⁶

In this long extract there are many points of interest to the student of the religious ideas of the Muslims, and of such of these, more especially, as are drawn from Judaism; but this is not the place to enter upon that subject. What we have to notice is the curious mingling of streams from the two sources, the popular tradition and our book of Job. In the Qur'ān we had the popular tradition pure and simple; nothing had reached Muḥammad of any questioning or rebellion on the part of Job. He had suffered; had been patient; had been rewarded. The source of his suffering is left obscure. Satan had touched him; by what authority, for what cause, we are not told. On that question the Muslim community exercised its ingenuity, as we have seen in al-Bayḍāwī's commentary, but it never entered their heads to question the spirit in which Job received his sufferings.

Yet among the Muslims were many who knew the truth of the case. There were Jews who had embraced Islām, and in the sacred books of whose old faith the story of the patriarch was told at length. Were they to make use of their knowledge, show themselves men learned in the "Stories of the Ancients," and, incidentally, dethrone Job from the saintly place which he held in the Muslim mind? It was a hard position they were in, and a dangerous. They might add to the knowledge given by Muḥammad and held by the Muslims—that was simple; but this was a case of correcting and changing it, and there lay danger. Some had attempted it in old days with Muḥammad himself—and suffered for their pains. Others, after Muḥammad's death, had attempted to introduce some of their old, familiar stories, which, though not contradicting, did not sound quite in unison with the faith of Islām, and had been harshly rebuked. Ka'b, one of our Jewish authorities here, could remember such a collision with Ibn 'Abbās,

²⁶ This by no means indicates doubt on the part of the writer as to the truth of what has preceded. It is sometimes used in that way, but it is also added to statements and traditions which are based upon the most unexceptionable authority. It is agnostic more than anything else.

when he had been compelled to submit himself with all humility.²⁷ But there was another side. The Muslims would ask them from time to time for stories about the prophets—were not they possessors and readers of *The Books?*—that mysterious term which we meet so often in Muslim theology. When thus pressed it was hard for a man not to consent and gain honor and profit by so doing. Yet all that these Jewish Muslims gave out had to be squared with the rule of Islām; their necks might be in peril if they made any mistake. And so our Job had not passed through all his trials when his fragments had been gathered and fixed in the Hebrew canon. He had still to suffer at the hands of Ka'b, Wahb, and all the rest; his indictment of the rule of the universe had to be cut out; his cry of agony diluted to the meekest wail; and the only part of his book which remains in anything like its true form is the overbearing and genuinely Semitic speech of the Lord—it needed no change to appear in decent Muslim company.

So I would explain the form of the story of Job as told by those Jewish Muslims. It might be asked if some intermediate source, or sources, did not come in between, but it can hardly be doubted that both Ka'b and Wahb knew Hebrew and had access to our book. Targums and Midrashim may have assisted them in their manipulations, but the burden of the crime lies upon them personally. Some of their changes are curious and hard to explain. Elihu, if it be Elihu, appears in a very different rôle and is used by them to explain Job's calamity and defend him against his friends. The Satan has embraced Islām in the most absolute sense. He has become a Shayṭān, one of the fallen Jinn, and, instead of wandering up and down in the earth, plays eavesdropper in heaven. Yet he is one of God's servants and addresses his Master as "My God." In this respect he is still the accusing angel of the Old Testament. Job's wife has been much developed. There seems from very early times to have been a feeling that more could be made of her, that there was here a waste of good artistic material. Even the LXX. appears to have felt the fascination that has led some to write of the girlhood of Shakespeare's heroines and to speculate on the character of Don Quixote's niece.

²⁷ P. 15 of the text from which I have translated. See, too, Sprenger's *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad*, Vol. III., p. cx.

It is curious to note, in view of the supposed oriental attitude towards women, that she develops, in some respects, more amiably than Job.

But along with these Jewish contributions there are mixed traditions of pure Muslim origin. These go back to Muḥammad himself, to Ibn 'Abbās, to al-Ḥasan, the son of 'Alī and grandson of Muḥammad, to 'Abd Allāh, son of the Khalifa 'Umar, and to others. In these we probably have a mixture of the folk-tale, bits of Jewish story that have filtered through, and simple oriental imagination. The Oriental abhors a vacuum, and has no scruples as to how he fills the gap.

We have now followed the traces, from Ezekiel down to the vast abyss of Muslim superstition, of what I believe to be the original form of the story of Job, and the question may fittingly arise: Do these traces enable us to reconstruct, with any exactness, what were the details of that story? Was the Satan in it? Were Job's friends in it? I cannot see my way to a definite answer to these questions. Apparently the Satan was not in the story as it reached Theodore of Mopsuestia; nor does he appear clearly in Muḥammad's version in the Qur'ān. But in this latter case it is well to remember how jerky and allusive is the treatment which Muḥammad gives the story, and that the Qur'ān commentators felt that the phrase, *Satan has touched me*, called for explanation. They would have expected *Thou hast touched me*, as it is hard to think that Satan could have power to injure one of God's prophets. And, again, as to Theodore of Mopsuestia, the fact that he takes offense at the interview between the Satan and the Lord may be pressed too far. He may only have objected to some of the words used, and the folk-tale of his childhood may well have had that expression of the humor and irreverence of the people. For it cannot be denied that the Satan, as Wellhausen has keenly pointed out, belongs to the realm of popular theology. He is the *dummer Teufel* of western folk-lore. He brings with him a humorous atmosphere, has a dash of stupidity, and can be beaten and cheated by clever people. Here the Lord makes evident fun of him and plays with him to suit His own purposes. But all this approaches perilously near the margin of guess. As to Job's wife, it is evident that she played the same part in Muḥammad's story as in our book. Of the friends of Job we find no trace, but that does not necessarily

involve that they were not there. The calamity that befell Job and the details of his restoration seem to have been the same. But the point that is certain and that remains after all has been said is that Muḥammad's Job is utterly resigned and submissive to whatever God may send upon him, while the Job of our book is led by misfortune to question the justice of the Ruler of the Universe, and finally to the position that man has in his conscience a guide which he must follow and which may lead him in the teeth of what appears to be God's law.